

CMPT 376W Summaries
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Summary 1

The article from Lulu Yilun Chen, "China's Workers are protesting Tech's Deadly '996' Overtime Culture. Alibaba's Jack Ma Says He Requires it", describes Chinese programmers are protesting against '996' culture while Alibaba co-founder Jack Ma says otherwise. The 996 culture means that a worker will work from 9:00am to 9:00pm for 6 days a week. This is the culture that was told by those who want to work in China's largest e-commerce platform Alibaba. The culture is also enforced by Jack Ma who believe that working in a 996 culture is a blessing, and telling people need to work 12 hours a day. In China's tech industry, there are many unexpected deaths of programmers and founders of Startup due to the stress from working long hours. Because of these incidents and Ma's comment, many Chinese worker decide to stand up against the idea of abusing workers from uncompensated overtime. From this movement, an unknown programmer created a website to share this movement on a code-sharing website called GitHub, where it becomes one of the most trending sites on there. The site is called "996.ICU" where ICU stands for Intensive Care Unit.

Summary 2

The article from Stephine Denning, "The Rumored Roots of Alibaba's results: The '996' Work Culture", describe that the '996' work culture is not the primary source of Alibaba's success. Jack Ma, co-founder of Chinese e-commerce platform Alibaba, claims that '996' work culture is the main reason what makes Alibaba successful today. '996' work culture is where an employee works from 9:00am to 9:00pm for 6 days a week. Denning compares Alibaba's recent performance against Amazon and eBay, and she found out that Alibaba's return on Assets is lower than its return on equity. This shows that they are not outperforming the assets that generates the net income despite of the solid financial performance. Also, the revenue per employee at Alibaba is RMB 528 thousand, while the industry standard is RMB 29 million. Therefore, it is important to see if Alibaba's 996 work culture will age gracefully in the future.

Summary 3

The article from Bryan Menegus, "Microsoft and GitHub Workers Take a Stand Against Grueling, Inhumane '996' Culture in China", describes that Microsoft and Github are supporting the movement against the '996' work life. '996' culture is when an employee works from 9:00am to 9:00pm for 6 days a week, and will not receive overtime pay. This culture has been widely used in many China Tech companies like Alibaba, and its founder Jack Ma embraced this culture. Because many worker in China does not share Ma's enthusiasm, an unknown

programmer created a code repository website on GitHub. The website is called “996.icu” where it stands for the ‘996’ culture will lead programmers to the hospital’s intensive care unit. The website blacklists those companies that enforce the practice of ‘996’, which include Alibaba, Huawei, Bytedance, and many other companies in China. As the site gains momentum and popularity on GitHub, Microsoft will later own that repository to show their support on this movement despite knowing that Chinese government will pressure them to censor the website.

Summary 4

The article from Bang Xiao, “Former Huawei employee speaks out on Shenzhen’s ‘996’ culture as Chinese city enforces paid leave”, describes an interview with former Huawei employee about his experience with 996 culture, and his reaction on Chinese government enforce new policy to enforce paid leave. Zeng Meng was employed by Chinese telecoms giant Huawei as a product manager back in 2012. Huawei is one of the big tech companies that enforce the ‘996’ work culture, which makes employees to work from 9:00am to 9:00pm for 6 days a week. Zeng describes that his work life has took over his personal life where he has no time for his family and other recreation times. Zeng was later terminated where his severance package didn’t include his overtime pays. He later sued Huawei and received some of his overtime, but got arrested for suspicion of violating trade secret. Recently, Shenzhen has become the first Chinese city to ensure workers in “Special industries” can have their paid leave. These companies in “special industries” like Huawei will now have to pay overtime or give extra annual leave days. Even with these policies enforced by the government, Zeng is still fear that it will not change the overwork culture in Shenzhen. Zeng explains that ‘996’ culture breaded in many labour laws in China, which includes long working hours, overtime payment, and penalties. However, since companies like Huawei provides great economic benefits to China, the government will allow these companies to get away with those laws. In the end, Zeng believes that ‘996’ has become a systematic issue that violates workers right, and more people need to fight against it.